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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated journals of the classroom experiences of 35 student teachers at Mississippi State University--Meridian Campus, employing both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The journals were assigned as a means of gaining a perspective of the student teachers' planning and implementation of lessons, their approach to discipline, their sense of efficacy, and their attitudes toward their experiences. Analysis of semantic choices, based on a prepared list of possible expressions (included in an appendix), determined whether the journals reflected negative, positive, or neutral attitudes. Results indicated that 29 of the journals were predominantly positive, 4 were neutral and 2 negative. The journals were also examined for evidence of reflection about the four areas of concern. The student teachers demonstrated higher levels of reflective thinking than did students in a previous study, as they commented on the differing backgrounds of the children in their classrooms, their extenuating home circumstances, and differences in rates of learning and learning styles. Two of the journals were selected for detailed examination, one representative of the positive and one representative of the negative semantic analysis. (Contains 12 references.) (JDD)

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EXAMINING PRESERVICE EXPERIENCES THROUGH JOURNALS. YEAR TWO

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate Spring 1993 student teachers' journals of their experiences in the classroom. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative aspects. An analysis of semantic choices was based on a prepared list of possible expressions and determined whether the journals reflected negative (more negative than positive), positive (more positive than negative), or neutral (balanced) attitudes toward efficacy, supervision, discipline, and students. The journals were predominantly positive, with four neutral, and two negative.

The journals were also examined for evidence of reflection about the four areas of concern. Insight provided by this examination enables preservice teachers to evaluate their experiences as precursors to success in their profession. This evaluation also allows researchers to evaluate programs and practices in the preservice teachers' preparation.

Introduction

Using journals as a method of reconstructing the day-to-day experiences of practice teaching became prevalent during the 1980's and continues to be used in the 1990's. Teaching involves a variety of interacting variables which frequently do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis. The use of journals a qualitative tool give a picture of the individual as a unique human being within the context of a social system. As we examine the recent changes in education, restructuring schools, redeveloping and redesigning the teacher education programs, adding parental involvement issues, and renewing interest in character education, for example, we begin to view this social system called "school" as an extremely complex combination of subsystems rather than a simple entity.

If we accept the assumption that the teacher is the most dominant influence during the 6 to 8 hours of the school day, we must also recognize the need for preparation of that teacher to function effectively in the diverse and unique situations that education produces. Likewise, there is an equally important need to equip preservice teachers to be successful in their practice teaching experiences in order to improve their

opportunities for an effective transition into career teaching. The practice teaching experience is the final stage of an intense preparatory program designed to provide student teachers with the knowledge and technical skills necessary to be successful career teachers. During this time, preservice teachers have the opportunity to develop teaching expertise, observe a professional in-service teacher, learn about students, other faculty, and themselves. For this reason, one of the possible requisites of the practice teaching activity is that students keep an experience and reflection journal to record valuable events, reactions, and insights.

During the Spring semester of 1993, 35 student teachers at Mississippi State University--Meridian Campus (MSU-MDN) were required to keep a journal for their observation period and practice teaching assignment. The journals were assigned as a means of gaining a perspective of the student teachers' planning and implementation of lessons, their approach to discipline, their sense of efficacy, and their attitudes toward their experiences. A team of researchers evaluated these journals to determine whether the students exhibited positive, neutral, or negative attitudes. Further consideration of the journals examined students' evaluations of their practice teaching activities, their

preparatory courses, their evidence of understanding the teaching and modeling of the education faculty, and their references to the relevance of the education curriculum to actual practice.

Review of Related Literature

A review of the related literature concerning student teaching and journals provided a wide range of studies with similar concepts or with relevant related concepts. Those studies or materials selected for inclusion in this review exhibited such descriptors as: elementary and secondary education, preservice teachers, practice and student teaching, concerns, attitudes, practical applications, theory, supervision, pedagogy, and reflective inquiry.

In one study by Clark and Peterson (1986), the authors identified teacher planning, thinking, and decision-making as a "large part of the psychological context of teaching" (p. 255). Teachers who think about what they do, what they teach, and what children/students learn are more able to contribute to the intellectual development of the students and to their own growth. According to Bolin (1988), teacher educators are agreed on the necessity of thoughtful planning and decision-making. "At this point, however, teacher educators cease to agree" (p. 48). The

technological or behavioristic approach to mastery of such thinking, planning, and decision-making skills as a part of teacher education programs identifies key teacher behaviors associated with thinking (Lanier & Little, 1986; Zumwalt, 1982, Tom, 1984, 1985, 1987). This approach holds that the study of thinking is more likely to provide insight and understanding and not rules or specific skills to be mastered. This approach requires that student teachers reflect critically on their work experiences. Kuhn (1986) stated that writing was the focus for the examination of the practice of thinking in the discussion of her research study.

Bolin (1988) wrote, "One of the tools currently used by researchers in writing has been the dialogue journal as it is used to support and assist students in extending ideas that are developed in class" (p. 49). She also added, "Like teachers of writing, many teacher educators have utilized journal keeping to promote deliberation about teaching" (p. 49). Bolin's (1988) study of one student's journal was designed to utilize the reflective journal as a supervisory tool. What she learned from her analysis of this journal was that her student teacher's latent philosophy of education was not changed by his practice teaching process.

Examination of the student's journal proved that he was not a deeply reflective student teacher. To the researcher, this indicated that something more should have been provided in his educational courses to assist him in being more deliberative. Despite the results of this analysis of Lou's journal, Bolin (1988) concluded, "The study of Lou suggests that the reflective journal may be a powerful tool for developing more thoughtful, reflective teacher leaders" (p. 53).

Holmes (1990) conducted another study which employed journals; this was a 4-year study of 4 students. He used their journals to identify student teaching concerns and priorities. He found 6 domains or categories of concern: "assessment, view of work, practical skills, attitudes, personal relations, and investment; he used these to establish a global picture of each student's concerns and priorities" (p. 2). The categories were further divided into 32 subcategories or included terms. Assessment of the journals included an arbitrary rating scale to indicate the magnitude of priorities. Twenty percent or more of the total entries indicated a high priority; 1 to 10 percent indicated a low priority. Holmes (1990) also employed interviews with the students' cooperating teachers and college supervisors. Holmes (1990) profiled 2 of the student

teachers extensively to determine their professional growth. His goal was to examine preservice journals to answer a research question concerning the appropriateness of the teacher education program to first-year teachers.

In a study of elementary teachers, Maxie (1989) examined the concerns of student teachers to analyze the role student teaching played. The study covered a 22-week period of time and was qualitative. The participants kept journals during specified weeks and were interviewed regarding their experiences. Concerns of student teachers included: discipline, evaluation, motivation, content inadequacy, management, planning, testing, time-on-task, and relationship with the cooperating teacher. Maxie (1989) found that student teachers exhibited a discrepancy between programmatic goals and personal outcomes. Furthermore, Maxie (1989) found this, "In effect, student teaching highlights concerns and provides features to resolve them" (p. 29). Her findings which were applicable to this research were summed up as follows:

> Student teaching is valued, because it occurs at the public school. The school with its children, classrooms, and cooperating teachers

is considered to be the real world of teaching. Apart from providing programmatic features to student teaching, the school by means of the cooperating teacher and children, provides orientations which define the work of teaching and successful teaching. Teaching is not the conscious application of theory to the practice setting. Furthermore, successful teaching requires the teacher to discipline, manage, and provide high-interest materials. As student teachers spend time in the schools, orientations provide explanations for survival concerns and assist in reducing anxiety associated with them (p. 31).

In the introduction to his study, Williams (1991) identified some criticisms of the student teaching practices:

1. As practiced, the field experience fosters a group management attitude rather than an intellectual leader orientation for the teacher.

2. The experience is overwhelming to most student teachers so that management of students takes precedence over learning.

3. Participants are encouraged to think their best learning comes from trial and error rather than through careful thought and

scholarship.

4. Adequate opportunity for both learning of skills and theoretical principles is missing in the typically short field experience (p. 2).

Williams' (1991) study focused on student teachers as naturalistic inquirers; his implications were that using naturalistic inquiry enhanced student teachers' performance and that cooperative teachers learned new inquiry techniques to use with their own students and to use themselves.

Volkman & Others (1992) investigated field-based reflective practices. Their study included elementary preservice teachers who participated in a 4-week field practicum. This study examined the student teachers' sense of efficacy. Students in the treatment group met regularly for networking. The sharing help students recast their ideas and increased their sense of efficacy at the end of the study. The treatment group noted that they found themselves thinking more and feeling more confident because of the networking with cooperating teachers and peers. From the standpoint of the present research study, this success with reflective practice could be incorporated into practice

teaching; in addition, reflective journals could help students keep up with ideas for networking sessions.

Having a global view of student teaching experiences from their journals provides a way to evaluate the reflective processes that these students employ when engaged in actual work situations. The insights gained from the students can be used to evaluate programs and individual classes that are incorporated in the teacher education program. Programmatic changes and additions to enhance students' reflective inquiry continues to be a demonstrated need. In a prior study, Richardson & Boutwell (1992) investigated student teaching journals for Spring semester, 1992. This study did not include field observations, but was limited to the students' journals. The journal data provided a record of what was done, seen, heard, and felt during the student teaching experiences. This study involved 34 students at MSU-MDN. Thirty-one journals were completed and analyzed semantically. This group consisted of 2 males and 32 females; there were 3 secondary and 31 elementary student teachers. This sample was predominantly white. The results of the study showed that 26 of the 31 journals were positive in attitude, while one journal was negative. Four of the journals were

designated neutral on the basis of semantic analysis (see Appendix A). The semantic analysis utilized phrases or expressions that were deemed positive or negative by the team of researchers and an independent examining group. The ratings were positive (more positive statements or phrases), negative (more negative than positive statements or phrases), and neutral (a balance between positive or negative statements or phrases). The primary concerns for this group were: discipline, cooperating teacher, self as teacher, students. The conclusion for this study indicated that students were not deeply reflective about their experiences; further studies should incorporate more sophisticated observational skills and directions concerning keeping journals.

Instrumentation/Data Collection

The quantitative aspect of this study consisted of the utilization of the previously generated lists of positive and negative semantic choices (See Appendix A). The journals were the source for data collection. There were 35 journals incorporated into the study and a wide range of effort was found in the journal keeping. Some were highly detailed and others were very sketchy. This was not a deterrent to the semantic analysis, however. Students were given no specific length for journal

entries but recorded something for every day spent in the classroom.

The qualitative aspect of the data collection was the search for evidence of reflective thinking in certain areas of concern: cooperating teacher, personal relations with children and others, discipline, self as teacher, planning, time management, practical skills, and attitude. During the Professional Seminar the student teachers were asked to keep reflective journals. No specific directions were given as to content or length of these records. The journals were read by a team of researchers to provide peer checking. A response to each journal was kept in each member's independent field log. Expressions or phrases related to the areas of concern were highlighted and then arranged to fit categories established by the team prior to the evaluation of the journals.

Sample

The sample consisted of 35 student teachers at MSU-MDN. There were 3 males; 2 were white, and 1 was black. The remainder were white females. All of the journals were completed satisfactorily for semantic analysis. All were included in the reflective inquiry analysis. The students were placed in schools in 7 counties. There were 35 cooperating teachers and 10 college supervisors.

Procedure and Analysis of Data

Data were collected by the Chairman of the Division of Education at MSU-MDN. Journals were kept during practice teaching and turned in at the conclusion of the Professional Seminar. These journals covered the 12 weeks of observation and practice teaching required during the semester. The evaluation of the journals was completed as soon as they were received by the research team. Journals were read and highlighted for positive, negative, and neutral semantic choices. Twenty-nine of the journals were rated as positive, 4 were neutral, and 2 were negative. Because of the preponderance of positive semantic choices, it was possible to rate the over-all impression of student teaching experiences as positive. Though not all students began with a positive attitude, most of them finished with positive expressions. The 2 negative journals focused on experiences that left the student teachers feeling distressed over aspects of the student teaching opportunity such as interaction with other teachers and staff and the interactions with the cooperating teachers and children in their assigned classrooms. One of these chose to student teach in the school where she had previously been employed; she found that this did not create an ideal environment for her practice

teaching. The other student teacher's journal was not entirely negative, but there were more negative comments about discipline, instruction, and supervision than there were positive comments.

The impressions of the journals that follow were the result of comparisons of the independent field logs and a discussion of the journals and logs by the team of researchers. Overall, the student teachers demonstrated higher levels of reflective thinking than did students in the previous study. Once again, the student teachers were positive in their attitudes. They were particularly positive about getting to know the children and letting the children get to know them. They appeared to reflect more extensively on the differing backgrounds of the children; the extenuating home circumstances and lack of parental guidance in several cases was noted as a factor in the children's relationships with peers and their ability to function effectively in the classroom. This group of student teachers also indicated a deeper understanding of the differing abilities found in any one group of children and the difference in rates of learning and learning styles. All of the student teachers found that the children in the classes in which they were teaching were capable of learning something; some of the student

teachers did have students with behavioral difficulties or emotional problems that prevented them from functioning effectively. A number of the student teachers chose to profile their analysis of a particular child and his or her progress during the 12-week observation/student teaching term.

The student teachers were generally positive about themselves as prospective teachers in the latter part of the student teaching experience. Prior to their Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instrument evaluations, there was a great deal of doubting and anxiety about their lesson plans and the performance of the lesson for the MSU-MDN supervisor. Despite these earlier doubts, most of the student teachers felt good about the outcome. Almost all of the student teachers expressed confidence in planning ability because they received positive feedback from their cooperating teachers on their lessons. Only a few prospective teachers expressed a deficiency in their relationship with their cooperating teacher. Another help in their classroom performance was the cooperating teachers' willingness to give the student teachers control for the 2-week period of total teaching required. Only a few student teachers said that their cooperating teacher was unwilling to relinquish

control of the classroom or was not supportive. Some negative attitudes and concerns were expressed by a few of the student teachers about their cooperating teachers' attitudes toward student teachers and toward the children in the classroom.

One of the greatest areas of concern for the student teachers was that of discipline and classroom control. The student teachers were unsure of their ability to successfully manage their classes at the beginning of their practice teaching; however, as time progressed, they began to express the idea that they were becoming firmer and more able to handle problems without feeling unsure of what to do, when to do it, or how to do it. Some of the student teachers learned that they did not want to practice classroom management techniques followed by their cooperating teacher. Many did not feel that yelling and being sarcastic were appropriate. It was a general eye-opener for these students to see discipline and classroom management in the "real world" classrooms.

One of the students' concerns was with being asked to serve as substitutes in other teachers' classrooms during the time they were supposed to be learning how to teach. Also, they expressed negative feelings about the standardized testing procedures and how they were

asked to participate in these activities. Most expressed dismay that there was so much to do during testing and the children became so tired, bored, and fractious.

Another area of concern expressed by the student teachers occurred in the early weeks of practice teaching. They felt very confused and unsure of themselves. Many of them expressed the idea of being overwhelmed with all of the things required for teachers, paperwork, duties, conferences, and the other requirements by building administrators. They were all very tired at the end of the day and especially at the end of the week. Most had no idea where their time had gone to during the early weeks. They noted in their journals that they were ill more frequently and reported higher stress than they had anticipated.

The second part of the study involved reading and analyzing the student teachers' journals a second time for evidence of reflective thinking. Most of the journals were reflective; however, there was still not sufficient depth to warrant a feeling of satisfaction with the students' instruction for keeping the journals. The students expressed time management concerns that indicated they may have had less time for

real consideration because of their duties in the schools and with their non-instructional activities. All of the students passed their assessments and most of them were successful in securing positions for the 1993-1994 school year.

Two of the journals were selected for particular examination because they were representative of the positive and the negative semantic analysis and for the results of the reflective thinking analysis. Both of the students selected were female. One taught in elementary school in a rural district; one taught in a middle school in a rural district and was involved with exceptional education.

Student A taught in a rural attendance center in the elementary division with a second grade class. She was 21 years of age and had attended this school during her high school years. She began her student teaching with little or no apprehension since she was returning to familiar territory. She did express the idea of the strangeness of coming back to work with her former teachers.

Student A's experiences with her cooperating teacher, with the grade she taught, and with her former school were very successful according to her journal. She said, "This was a perfect way to begin my

student teaching experience." She continually expressed positive comments about her cooperating teacher (Mrs. N.). "Mrs. N. is very stern with her class but yet she shows warmth and interest in her children. . . I think she's a good role model for the children and myself." Furthermore, Student A felt that the children accepted her because of Mrs. N's comments and flexibility. "As Mrs. N. goes through the day, she explains everything the children are doing. She has begun involving me in many of the students' activities." Student A also stated, "From day one, I could not have asked for anyone to have been any nicer or more helpful. Today Mrs. N. made me feel very welcomed into her classroom. She said before Christmas she had worried about having someone else in the classroom. Now that I have been here a week, she expressed to me that she was very comfortable having in the room and that she thought we worked very well together. These remarks made me feel even better about beginning to teach next week."

With regard to her teaching/planning activities, practical skills, and concerns with self-as-teacher, Student A stated, "Before I began, I was not as nervous as I thought I would be; and, when I actually taught, it was much like presenting a mini-lesson in front of my peers." Student A

felt that student-centered activities was more rewarding for the students than teacher/lecture. The children loved her centers and the cooperating teacher was very encouraging about her methods. One of the teaching activities was Sing/Spell/Read and Write. Mrs. N. gave Student A an explanation of how this program worked and began to involve her in its use almost immediately. As the semester progressed, Student A developed a strong interest in the success that the students had with this type of program. Student A did indicate that she gave test questions that were higher level thinking skills than the students were accustomed to having from Mrs. N. When they were equally successfully on a test, Student A felt justified in having these higher expectations. Student A felt that she learned a great deal from Mrs. N., but she also felt that she learned some things through trial and error. Mrs. N. was reluctant to give up the teaching of the morning classes and let Student A assume full teaching responsibilities for the two weeks required. She wanted to continue reading to the students and inspiring in them a love for reading. At the end of the two weeks, she began to take back the morning classes immediately. This was her area of special concern, and she felt that the children needed her influence. Student A regretted that

she was not able to teach the morning classes for a longer period of time.

Student A prepared a Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instrument (MTAI) portfolio to present for her student teaching evaluation by her college supervisor. Her cooperating teacher helped her correct any errors and gave her feedback on how to present some of the elements included in the plans. Her success in preparing this MTAI unit helped to express this idea, "I feel that I will be prepared next year to compose and carry through the units I'll have to prepare during my first year of teaching. Her comment on her first full day of teaching was, "I must admit, I was pretty tired at the end of the day. I enjoyed feeling like a teacher--a 'real' teacher. Mrs. N. evaluated Student A often and gave her constant feedback on how she was doing in the classroom. This prepared Student A to successfully complete her MTAI evaluation with a minimum of anxiety. However, Student A did feel somewhat nervous than she expected to feel. Immediately before her college supervisor's arrival, Student A said, "Before he got there I was a nervous wreck". When he arrived, she said, "Once I began my lesson, I forgot about him even being there. Once it was over, his comments were very

encouraging. There was definitely a feeling of relief . . ."

With regard to discipline and her students, Student A only recorded that the students in her afternoon math classes were rowdy. She did not express any difficulties with managing the classroom. She did explain at length about a parent/teacher conference in which the mother would not let anyone else talk and kept saying that her son was a "bad boy." Student A was sure that the child only reflected what the mother believed about him, but evidence to the contrary was found in the child's actual classroom behavior. He was not a bad child who misbehaved. He was actually a very shy child. She did not reflect on the frustration of the mother; however, she did reflect on what kind of an attitude would produce these thoughts about a child. She felt that the other teachers in the conference were in agreement with her on this issue. Some of the students would not try to do assignments and wanted to be spoon-fed their directions, so Student A designed a series of worksheets that helped the students to gain skills in reading and following directions for themselves. She expressed her theories on learning in this way, "I believe that children learn more when they are actively involved in the lesson. I made sure that each day I had some kind of activity that each

child could participate in. She further stated, I feel that it's important to make each child feel comfortable in front of the room. Student A discovered an important fact: some children do not have anyone to help them at home. She said, "I'm very concerned about the children today (March 30). They do not seem concerned or worried about learning what they are told to learn or doing what they are told to do."

One of the most interesting parts of Student A's journal was her recounting of an incident with one of her boys in the classroom. J. told Student A that his dog had 10 puppies the night before. He came back to tell her that they cut all the puppies tails off, too. This surprised Student A. Later, he asked Student A, "Mrs. C. you wanna see one of them puppy tails?" Student A insisted that she did not want to see one; however, Mrs. N. asked to look at what was wrapped up in the wad of paper towel. Student A headed for the back of the classroom to avoid the gruesome sight; when she got there and turned around, all she saw was a little brown puppy's tail. Her remark was, "I really thought I'd be sick. As you can see, my day was off to a 'tail spinning' start." One day when Mrs. N. was absent, Student A taught the classes; she remarked, "I had trouble with the same children that I have trouble with when Mrs. N.

is there. . . . A. is the main one I had problems with. I got on to him repeatedly; I talked to him about how I expected him to act, and then I still had to put him in the hall for disrupting the class. . . Even though I was feeling like the villain, the children must not have thought I was as mean as I felt. I got more notes and pictures that said, 'I love you, Mrs. C.' than I had ever received before." Overall, Student A felt that she handled problem children and discrepant events with consistency and even-handed discipline. She was satisfied with her ability to manage classroom activities and student behavior. She contrasted her discipline with Mrs. N's form of discipline and did not feel that either one of them should embarrass children or yell at them when they did not catch on. She also expressed the idea that the cooperating teacher was not as consistent as she should be. Student A's approach to discipline was described in this way, "When I discipline a child, I try to make it a private conversation or just simply write their names on the board." In a later conversation with her college supervisor, Student A was given advice on handling discipline. She felt that this was very helpful to her. Student A felt a strong attachment to the children at the end of her practice teaching experience.

Student A expressed a positive attitude throughout most of her student teaching experience. She appeared to have no problems with time management. She did not indicate that she felt any stress over her non-teaching responsibilities, nor did she express the idea that her student teaching had created time management problems for her.

Student A further expressed positive attitudes toward the principal of her school and the other teachers who worked with her. She was particularly impressed with the teaching assistant who worked in the classroom with Mrs. N. and stated often that the assistant was very conscientious and careful to help the students in any way possible to achieve success.

Student A's journal was a record of an extremely pleasing and successful practice teaching experience; however, it did not demonstrate highly reflective thinking of any type. This student did not evaluate observations of things that happened in the classroom. Her attitude was even euphoric at times; this attitude was not consistent with the attitudes of most of the practice teachers who were apparently thoroughly grounded in realism rather than idealism.

In contrast to Student A, Student B was older, approximately 42

years of age. She had returned to school after working a number of years as a teaching assistant for a rural middle school in the Chapter 1 program. Student B began her journal with anxiety. She was concerned with her college supervisor because she had never had a class from him. She was also concerned over whether she would be able to make a difference in her students' lives. She also expressed negative comments about the experienced teachers in her building, whom she said, "are just here. They seem to be here out of need for a paycheck and not to be A REAL TEACHER."

With regard to her vision of herself as a teacher, Student B felt that she would not be fulfilled if she couldn't make a difference with at least a few of her students. She said, "I hope I can reach them all in some way that could reward them in some part of their lives." She also felt strange about being in a classroom with another adult after having been in charge of her own computer lab for a lengthy time. She compared her cooperating teacher's style with her own and found that they seem to match perfectly. She felt that the cooperating teacher's philosophy was almost the same as hers. Student B's philosophy might be described as eclectic. She was idealistic about her students and her expectations of

her own abilities. She was realistic about the school situation and the motivations of others toward working with exceptional education students. She was pragmatist in that she expected to teach in a way that was proven and workable. She also exhibited some characteristics of existentialism in that she talked about wanting her students to grow to their full potential, to be and become more than they thought they were able to be or become. She was realistic in this respect, "I know that this will most likely be impossible, but I am going to give it my best shot." She further stated, " I want to be really effective as a teacher, not just make a paycheck. The money will not hurt either. For the past five years I have been doing a teacher job for less than minimum wage. But most of all, I want a student to say one day that I made a difference in his or her life." On several occasions very negative comments were found in Student B's journal. In one instance, she reported that another teacher was jealous of her success and saying negative things about her methods of working with the students. She reported that she now understood why her former administrator had advised her not to practice teach in the school where she had been working. However, she did comment favorably on her cooperating teacher who assisted her in every

way possible to make the practice teaching experience rewarding and successful. In a moment of reflection, Student B said, "I know that I'm real eager and enthusiastic. I should not be since I have been in the school system for so long already according to veteran educators. Maybe they need a refresher course." Her fellow teachers were her pet peeve throughout her teaching experience because she wanted them to be excited, too. She also expressed the belief that some teachers need motivation as much as the students do. She felt that she needed to be careful in her relationships with these teachers, and she did not want to be the wrong kind of role model for the students.

Student B felt that she had developed a good rapport with her students from the start. She concentrated on working one-to-one mostly, or in small groups of no more than three. Her students were resource students, preparing their work for other classes in which they were mainstreamed and this entailed a different kind of teaching method. One of the problems that Student B encountered was with the regular education teachers who would not give her the assignments quickly enough or would not help her with her plans for the week. She remarked that one teacher was terrible and gave tests and worksheets in

science that she took hours to answer herself. Her comment was, "He needs a pill." She pushed the other teachers to provide her with appropriate work for her students. The record in her journal indicated that she may have gone to greater lengths than someone else would have because of her philosophy. She felt that the students needed all the help they could get because she saw potential that others might not recognize. She remarked, "I can't change the world, but I want to change these 26 students' lives for the better." One student was in danger of failing because he needed extra attention to help him understand his work. When one young man was successful on his history test, Student B actually hugged him. She said, "It shocked me and him." She obviously did not expect to react with that level of excitement over his success. On one occasion, she concentrated on a specific student who needed a behavior change. Through her efforts, he was able to obtain the help he needed and gain some motivation. As time went by, she was able to obtain more cooperation from the regular education teachers. One of the students could read but could not understand the words he read. This resulted in a semester-long project to help him make connections with the words and their meanings. Later

in the year, Student B learned that she needed to back off of her "mother hen routine."

In planning and handling her Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instrument evaluation, Student B expressed extreme distress. She said, "I'm so scared. I know I can do well, but just knowing that he will be there judging every move I make is horrible. I can't sleep. I dream about it when I do sleep." She fixed up the room and made a practice of using different teaching methods to get ready, but this did not seem to provide the confidence she needed to alleviate the distress. When the time for her evaluation approached, Student B said, "D-Day will be next Tuesday. I wish I still had my nerves in the same shape they were in five years ago. Everyone tells me not to worry, but my black cloud still hangs over my head. I have decided . . . to just have class like I do every day. . . All I can do is the best I can." Afterwards, she said, "Well, it is done. The kids were great. I was worried that they might be too quiet and not respond, but I don't believe Dr. B's presence bothered them at all. After the first few minutes, I even calmed down. In fact, at times I didn't think about Dr. B begin there." "Dr. B said I did a good job." Student B needed to improve on only a few minor things and she

felt really good about her success.

The most negative event recorded in Student B's journal was her experience in the teachers' lounge, "the den of iniquity." She overheard another student teacher and 2 veteran teachers talking about her and saying very uncomplimentary things. She was hurt, mad, frustrated. She confronted the fellow student teacher directly and shook her finger in his face. She told him that he was listening to and following the wrong crowd. She did not think that she could be that kind of person, and so she worked to resolve the argument with him. Though she did not record this event as extremely negative, Student B was hit in the face when she broke up a fight between 2 students. She received a black eye and bruised cheek. She cried and this upset the 2 boys more than the punishment they received. Her comment of this event was, "Teachers must try and keep of the safety of the students in mind while also keeping safe themselves. It's a fine line we must walk." In one introspective moment, Student B reflected, "Maybe I am too protective with these students. I get so frustrated with some teachers though. All they see is the bad. I wish for once they would pick out the good in students and reward them instead of the bad and punish." Her comment

after completing her student teaching experience was, "Some of the teachers here . . . don't realize that I have watched them. I have learned a lot of both good and bad from them. I have also been fortunate to work in the school system and have the experiences most new teacher do not have."

In closing her journal, Student B reflected, "As I look back, my student teaching was the best. I had the best teacher anyone could have. She helped me tremendously. She made sure I was exposed to everything I would need. I talked with parents, was an active participant in a parent teacher conference, completed a teacher narrative, student IEP's, and an IEP meeting with parents. I pulled duty also. She corrected me when I needed it, or maybe I should say she suggested new and better ways. She was always telling me how good I was doing. We have become really good friends. She did not interfere, but she did not go and set in the teachers' lounge every day after the first week like some teachers do." Student B revealed some personal comments about her own life at the end of her journal; she felt that she had finally overcome some things that needed to be put behind and expressed the belief that her future was finally in proper perspective. Her final idea was

to enroll in the graduate program and begin working on her Master of Education degree. She summed it all up in this way, "First and most, I want to make a difference. I want students, whoever they are, to succeed in life the best that is possible.

Student B's journal was more negative than other journals; however, she reflected more deeply than did some of the students who encountered no problems. Reflective inquiry had not been a large part of this student's educational life, but she showed growth in this area during her student teaching experiences.

Conclusions/Findings

Generalization about student teaching from this study to other populations is not possible; however, the present study provides examination of some specific and traditional concerns expressed by student teachers everywhere. The student teachers during the Spring semester of 1993 journalled about a wide variety of subjects, concerns, and interests. Their journals revealed the wide variety of unique individuals, approaches, philosophies, and expectations that one would expect to find in a group that ranged in age from 21 to approximately 50.

The journals also revealed a wide range of reflective inquiry.

Students showed great depth of thinking about how their preparation related to their actual practice. This is an improvement over the previous study's student teachers. The categories examined in this study were expanded to include more areas of concern and therefore provide more opportunity to examine what improvements could be made to help students think more and more deeply about their university courses and their student teaching experiences.

Higher order thinking skills will continue to be a high priority in the world of professions and technology. The teachers who work with children in this decade will be preparing a new generation of Information Age professionals and workers who will need to be able to practice the inquiry methods that have been introduced to the prospective teachers in another century. The need to carry reflective inquiry throughout the entire educational program is imperative if our future professionals and technicians are going to function successfully. Educational programs must be adjusted to provide the necessary introduction and instruction in critical thinking for our teacher educators. Advance cognitive skills for teacher educators means advancements in their use and application in classrooms.

Future studies of a similar nature are planned with Spring semester practice teachers. This semester's work provides a larger sample and a wider diversity of teaching methods, philosophies, and styles than does the Fall semester.

One aspect for consideration in a future study would be assessment. Another would be time management and physical considerations. To fully examine the student teaching experience with surveys, interviews, videotapes and other methods of recording data is a future goal for research of this type. Also, interviews with university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and significant others could help to reveal the depth of the learning which occurs during student teaching. A final addition to the journal experiences would be to have students write a reflection based on everything they have recorded in their journals for examination according to established criteria.

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Appendix

Key Words and/or Descriptors for Analysis of MSU-Meridian Student Teaching Journals - Faculty Generated

Positive Terms:	Negative Terms:
stimulating	anxious
useful	afraid
practical	scared
exciting	apprehensive
helpful	useless
encouraging	waste of time
inspired	distressed
confident	uneasy
assured	nervous
pleased	impatient
rewarding	fatigued (tired)
at ease	lost
good day (great day)	inexperienced

Note: Nouns, verbs, and or phrases are included

Key Words and/or Descriptors for Analysis of MSU-Meridian Student Teaching Journals - Student Generated

Positive Terms:	Negative Terms:
smiling face	frowning face
O.K. day	terrible
did very well	not the best day
feeling more comfortable	failed miserably
enjoyed teaching	Ugh!!
sigh of relief	Who wouldn't worry about MTAI?
good week	TGIF
on cloud nine	really an eye-opener
feel like a real teacher	What a bummer!
smooth	managed to survive
comfortable	really wound up
so far so good	problems already
fell in love with kids	guess I'm on my own
	wild day
	weird